

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby the variable aperture value of the aperture device may be changed in at least one of the ascending and descending manner at the desired focal length value while maintaining the desired focal length value, as shown in Figs. 8, 11 and 12 and as described in the corresponding disclosure in the specification at page 26, line 6 to page 29, line 14, and at page 39, line 11 to page 41, line 13.

It is respectfully submitted that the amendments to claims 1 and 9 are clarifying in nature only and that no new matter has been added and that no new issues have been raised which require further consideration on the merits and/or a new search. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 1 and 9 be approved and entered under 37 CFR 1.116.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover, that the amendments to the claims are not related to patentability, and do not narrow the scope of the claims either literally or under the doctrine of equivalents.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 1-8 were again rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 6,134,053 ("Kabe et al"); and claims 9-16 were again rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Kabe et al and USP 5,576,892 ("Hotta et al"). These rejections, however are respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

In the Response to Arguments on page 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner asserts that claims 1 and 9 claim "changing the aperture device in either the ascending or descending manner while descending manner while maintaining the desired focal length value" (emphasis original). Thus, the Examiner argues that Kabe et al discloses this feature of claims 1 and 9 since according to Kabe et al, the aperture can be moved in either the opening and the closing direction at an insensitive zone.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that amended claim 1 now more clearly recites the feature of the present invention whereby the lens driving device comprises a driving member driven by the single driving source for driving the moving lens group frame to achieve a desired focal length value of the lens optical system from among a plurality of focal length values, and for then driving the aperture device to change the variable aperture value of the aperture device in at least one of the ascending and

descending manner at the desired focal length value while maintaining the desired focal length value. And similarly, it is respectfully submitted that amended claim 9 now more clearly recites the feature of the present invention whereby the third cam portion drives the aperture device to change the variable aperture value in at least one of the ascending and descending manner at the desired focal length value when the moving lens group frames are in a state of not being displaced in the optical axis direction due to the moving lens group frames being in the range of the second cam portion.

That is, according to the claimed present invention as recited in amended claims 1 and 9, the variable aperture value may be driven in the ascending manner, the descending manner, or both the ascending and descending manner without changing the focal length value.

For example, when the power switch 47 is activated, the main routine of image pickup processing as shown in Fig. 8 is started. Thus, after the power is activated, system startup processing is performed (S100) and the driving motor 21 drives the image pickup lenses to the wide angle position (S101). Then, if the zoom-up switch 48 is operated (S102), zoom up driving is performed (S103), and if the zoom-down switch 49 is operated (S104), zoom-down driving is performed (S105). Then, if the release switch 50 is turned on (S106), photometry operations and exposure

calculations are performed (S110), and the aperture driving subroutine A is performed (S111 - See Fig. 11) to set the aperture to the aperture setting determined by the exposure calculations. Image data of the object is then acquired (S112 and S113), and the aperture driving subroutine B is performed (S114 - See Fig. 12) to return the aperture to its original position (before the execution of aperture driving subroutine A), and the image data is displayed (S115).

As described in the specification at page 20, line 18 to page 21, line 4, the aperture is driven in a similar manner when the lens groups are in a position other than the wide-angle position. That is, when the cam followers are in a zoom stopping region, the cam ring is rotated in the D1 direction, and the aperture ring is rotated through a prescribed angle with respect to lens frame 4 to open the aperture. After the image pickup operation, the cam ring is rotated to return the cam follower to the stopping region corresponding to the zoom position, thereby returning the aperture to the minimum value. Thus, the aperture value may be driven in the ascending manner direction and in the descending manner without changing the focal length value.

It is respectfully submitted that Kabe et al does not disclose, teach or suggest the above described features of the claimed present invention. Significantly, according to Kabe et al, changing the aperture value requires moving the lens mount 26

to two focal length positions. As described, for example, at column 10, lines 8-44 of Kabe et al, insensitive zones 72 and 73 are provided at different focal lengths, and driving plates 43 and 74 are arranged near insensitive zones 72 and 73, respectively. According to the teachings of Kabe et al, at insensitive zone 72, the diaphragm driving plate 43 comes into contact with diaphragm driving pin 24 to adjust the iris diaphragm 22 to the minimum diaphragm stop. In order to change the diaphragm stop from the minimum, according to Kabe et al, the focal length must be changed so that the diaphragm driving pin 24 can be engaged with the diaphragm driving plate 74 at insensitive zone 73 to drive the iris diaphragm in the "iris-out" to a desired diaphragm stop.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Kabe et al clearly does not disclose, teach or suggest the feature of the claimed present invention as recited in independent claims 1 and 9 whereby the variable aperture value of the aperture device is changed in at least one of the ascending and descending manner at the desired focal length value.

It is respectfully submitted, moreover that Hotta et al has merely been cited for the disclosure of an additional lens group moved by a single driving source.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended claims 1 and 9, as well as

claims 2-8 and 10-15 respectively depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguishes over Kabe et al and Hotta et al, taken singly or in combination, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,



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